

Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 04724 042005Z

63

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SUBJECT: NATO SPONSORED SYMPOSIUM ON ENERGY: SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT

REF: STATE 191957; USNATO 4329; USNATO 4492.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE ECONOMIC DIRECTORATE DOCUMENT DESCRIBED
SEPTTEL AND EMBODYING BELGIAN AND FRENCH PROPOSALS FOR LIMITING
PROPOSAL ENERGY TOPIC:

BEGIN TEXT:

PROPOSED ROUND TABLE ON PROSPECTS, CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS
OF EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

OUTSIDE THE WESTERN WORLD THE SOVIET UNION, SAUDI ARABIA,
IRAN AND THE ARAB PERSIAN GULF STATES HOLD THE BULK OF THE
WORLD'S KNOWN OIL RESOURCES. WHILE THE RESOURCES OF THE ARAB
COUNTRIES AND IRAN ARE FAIRLY WELL KNOWN, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE
UNCERTAINTY REGARDING THE REAL OIL POTENTIAL OF THE SOVIET UNION.
NO SOVIET OFFICIAL FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PROVED CRUDE OIL
RESERVES BUT IT IS KNOWN THAT A SUBSTANTIAL AREA OF THE SOVIET
UNION, PARTICULARLY EAST OF THE URALS, IS A SEDIMENTARY BASIN
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PAGE 02 NATO 04724 042005Z

WHICH COULD CONTAIN VAST QUANTITIES OF OIL. THE OIL AND GAS
JOURNAL REPORTS THAT AS OF 1ST JANUARY, 1973 PROVED RESERVES
IN THE SOVIET UNION WERE ESTIMATED AT SOME 11 BILLION TONNES
(ABOUT 12 PERCENT OF WORLD RESERVES).

HOWEVER, BOTH THE NATURAL GAS AND CRUDE OIL RESOURCES OF THE USSR ARE FREQUENTLY LOCATED IN DIFFICULT AND REMOTE TERRAIN WHICH POSES ACUTE PROSPECTING PROBLEMS SIMILAR TO THOSE ENCOUNTERED BY WESTERN PROSPECTORS IN THE ARCTIC AREAS OF NORTH AMERICA.

TWO QUESTIONS ARISE IN THIS CONNECTION:

- SHOULD THE SOVIET UNION AIM AT A VERY SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENTAL RATE OF ITS RESOURCES? COULD IT ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE WITHOUT WESTERN AND JAPANESE PARTICIPATION IN TERMS OF FINANCE, EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY?

SECONDLY:

- WHAT IS THE SOVIET UNION'S CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPING MEANS OF TRANSPORTING OIL AND NATURAL GAS PRODUCTS BOTH TO DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MARKETS?

THE SIZE OF THE SOVIET DOMESTIC MARKET FOR OIL DETERMINES THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE USSR CAN EXPORT. ALREADY CERTAIN COMECON COUNTRIES ARE BUYING RELATIVELY SMALL QUANTITIES OF OIL FROM MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES, ALTHOUGH THEY CONTINUE TO RELY ON THE USSR FOR THE BULK OF THEIR REQUIREMENTS.

ANY ASSESSMENT OF THE USSR'S ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SOLUTION OF THE WORLD'S ENERGY PROBLEMS WOULD ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER ITS CAPABILITY TO EXPORT COAL AND URANIUM ORE, AND TO ENRICH URANIUM FOR THIRD-PARTY ACCOUNT.

AN INTERESTING ASPECT OF WORLD OIL PROSPECTS COULD ALSO BE THE EXAMINATION OF THE EVOLVING RELATIONS BETWEEN CERTAIN OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES AND THE SOVIET UNION ACTING AS A SUPPLIER OF TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT OR PURCHASER OF CERTAIN AMOUNTS OF OIL TO BE PLACED SUBSEQUENTLY ON THE WORLD MARKET.

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PAGE 03 NATO 04724 042005Z

FOR A CLEARER COMPREHENSION OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE ROLE OF THE USSR IN THIS FIELD IT IS INDISPENSABLE TO JUXTAPOSE THIS ISSUE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE WORLD'S ENERGY SUPPLY AND DEMAND POSITION, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS OIL. IT WOULD ALSO BE NECESSARY TO EXAMINE WAYS IN WHICH IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE, OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES, TO BALANCE SUPPLY AND DEMAND (E.G. SUBSTITUTION OF VARIOUS ENERGY RESOURCES, DISCOVERY OF NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY, IMPROVING METHODS OF UTILIZATION, ETC.).

WITH THE ABOVE ISSUES IN MIND, THE ECONOMIC DIRECTORATE ANTICIPATES HOLDING A ROUND TABLE AT NATO HEADQUARTERS, BRUSSELS ON 31ST JANUARY AND 1ST FEBRUARY, 1974 ON "PROSPECTS, CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR".

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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